

***TOWN OF NEWFIELDS
2009 BUDGET HEARING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2009***

Members of the Board of Selectmen: Chairman Wesley T. Moore, Michael Woodworth, and Rosanne C. Gilbert.

Chairman Wes Moore opened the meeting at 7:15pm. He thanked the members of the Budget Advisory Committee – Jamie Thompson, John Crisp, and Michael Kahlke – for their hard work on the 2009 Budget.

The handouts to the residents attending the meeting were the 2009 Budget, the 2009 Default Budget, the 2009 Warrant, and the Expenditures for 2008. Wes thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Wes explained that the Board is acutely aware of the nation's economy and people struggling with their own budgets. He is happy to report that the 2009 budget has been reduced even though there is a shortfall in expected revenues to the Town. The budget for 2008 was \$1,483,596 and the 2009 budget being presented tonight is \$1,451,985.

#4142-4139 Executive - \$80,500: includes salaries and wages for staff, compensation for trustees, and selectmen. The amount is \$2,500. more than last year.

#4140-4149 Election, Voter Registration and Vital Statistics - \$6,060: this line has been reduced because there are fewer elections in 2009.

#4150-4151 Financial Administration - \$23,000: the cost for maintaining the fiscal records of the Town, treasurer stipend, the cost of the annual audit and the accounting software and support. This line has increased as the cost for the annual audit has increased dramatically..

#4152 Revaluation of Property - \$15,000: the cost for Assessing and Cartographic Associates. Purvis Associates does our assessing and Cartographic Associates does our mapping. This decrease is due to the fact that the year of revaluation and the associated costs have been completed.

#4153 Legal Expense - \$15,000: the cost of Town Counsel who provides legal services to the Board of Selectmen. It was noted that the Selectmen utilize the free services of the Local Government Center as much as possible. The Town Counsel handles contracts, law suits, etc. for the Town.

#4155-4159 Personnel Administration - \$50,000: employee costs mandated by the federal or state government such as FICA, social security, and retirement. This line has increased because of rate hikes in the town's contributions.

#4191-4193 Planning & Zoning - \$31,927: compensation for the Town Planner who oversees site plans, subdivision applications, and amendments. This also includes the Planning Board and Zoning Board operating expenses and compensation for the Secretary. This line decreased.

#4194 General Government Buildings – \$18,000: the cost of operating town buildings such as fuel, utilities, lawn care, water & sewer, and security. This line was increased by

\$18,000 as heating fuel prices and water & sewer prices have increased. This line was also increased as there will not be a Warrant Article this year for an expendable trust fund.

#4195 Cemeteries - \$29,692: the cost of maintaining the cemeteries. Cemeteries are overseen by the cemetery trustees. The line is lower than last year and \$9,130. was returned to the Town by the Cemetery Trustees for the 2008 fiscal year.

#4196 Insurance - \$96,000: The cost of employee medical/dental insurance, the town's liability, commercial automobile, and workers compensation insurance. This line has been increased by \$8,000. as insurance rates have increased. It was noted that employees with medical and dental insurance coverages are now paying 10% of the premiums. There are also 53 pay periods in 2009.

#4197 Advertising & Regional Assoc.: - \$3,000: the cost of dues and membership fees to organizations such as NH City and Town Clerks Association, NH Municipal Association, NH Tax Collectors Association, and Seacoast Fire Chiefs Association. This line remains the same as last year.

#4199 Other General Government: - \$21,000: this is a miscellaneous line and is used for office supplies, hydrants, Conway Office Products, WB Mason, Sec. of State Vital Records, LGC, Selectmen training, etc. This has been increased by \$5,000.

#4210-4214 Police - \$287,514: - Police Department operating expenses. Included in this budget, but not limited to, are increases in employee compensation and fuel. This is an increase of \$12,523. The original increase was 3%, but the last payroll for year end 2008 was paid in January, 2009. Wes had made a motion to reduce the force by 1 full-time officer. This was not supported by the other Selectmen.

#4215-4219 Ambulance - \$5,100: - this amount is the same as last year per the terms of the existing ambulance services agreement.

#4220-4229 Fire - \$39,400: - Fire Department operating costs.

#4240-4249 Building Inspection - \$4,100: - This is the compensation for the building inspector who reviews building permits, building plans, inspects buildings and enforces building codes, along with software, membership fees, printing, and other expenses. The amount has increased by \$100. this year to include the BOCA membership. Part of this line is reimbursed by fees.

#4290-4298 Emergency Management - \$15,200: - the cost for emergency services for the town, training costs, and operating costs. This is \$500. less than last year. The funds taken from the Emergency Management Expendable Trust Fund to pay for items needed during the December 2008 ice storm will be replenished if and when FEMA reimburses the Town.

#4299 Other (Dispatch) - \$34,174: - the cost of police and fire dispatch services provided by the Newmarket Dispatch Center. The increase of \$6,000. since last year is due to an increase in the contract the Town has with Newmarket. The Budget Advisory Committee suggests re-visiting this again when the current contract expires.

#4312 Highways & Streets - \$148,600: - this includes both summer and winter maintenance.

The paving portion of this budget was reduced by \$70,000. as paving Old Lee Road has been temporarily postponed. Brian Knipstein and Jeff Buxton were upset with the reduction in the paving budget. Brian feels the Town will get behind on the paving schedule and not catch up. Jeff feels the only departments being reduced substantially

are the highway and fire departments. Brian said that all of the paving money goes directly to the pavers – no money goes to Knipstein/Conner. Wes said that with two new subdivisions going in it does not make sense to pave Old Lee Road this year. Brian wants to use the \$70,000. to pave Deertrees, Bassett Lane, Finn Avenue, and Partridge Hill. These roads need an overlay now to avoid having to be re-built in the future at twice the price. He also feels strongly that part of Old Lee Road should be paved this year. Brian feels this reduction in the Highway Budget will only save forty cents on the tax rate and more than \$80,000 will be needed to fix all of the roads in town. It was suggested that the town acquire a bond to fix all of the roads at a future date. Michael Sununu does not want to have to pay for the interest on a bond. He feels the roads need to be paved before they require rebuilding. Wes feels that it is most important that taxpayers keep money in their pockets this year. He then advised that the funds could be put back into the budget at the Deliberative Session.

#4316 Street Lighting - \$7,800: - PSNH announced a price increase for electricity in 2009 and this line was increased by \$520. to cover that increase.

#4323-4325 Sanitation - \$119,800: - Waste collection, recycling, and waste disposal costs are all subject to contract. The spring and fall cleanup days have been cancelled for 2009, however the Household Hazardous Waste Cleanup Day will still take place on October 3rd.

#4414 Pest Control - \$0: - Monies were expended in 2007 because of the tragedy of a local youth being diagnosed with EEE. Some of these funds were reimbursed by the State of New Hampshire. This line will remain at zero as this is now on a Warrant Article.

#4415-4410 Health Agencies, etc. - \$6,500: - This line item is money that is requested by organizations that provide health and human services to the residents of Newfields. This is the same amount as last year.

#4441-4442 Direct Assistance - \$2,500: - The amount is the same as in prior years. The money is used to assist town residents with basic necessities such as housing, medication, electricity, heat, and food for those who qualify.

#4520-4529 Parks & Recreation - \$3,000: - the cost of lawn care for parks and recreational areas around town. This is the same as last year.

#4550-4559 Library - \$30,613: - this is for the operating costs for the Paul Memorial Library. The new book purchase line has been reduced by \$2,500. The library is overseen by the Library Trustees. Jennifer McPherson asked why the Town is giving money to the Library when the Library has \$15,000. in their own funds. She said the Town could petition the Library to return money to the Town and that the Library should use their own funds before asking the Town for money. It was noted that the new driveway and parking lot at the Library have not been completed. The Board of Selectmen have no control over changes at the Library.

#4583 Patriotic Purposes - \$250: - covers the cost of buying flags. The amount is the same as last year.

#4589 Other Culture and Recreation - \$4,000: - These are the funds used for Celebration events. The Celebration Committee does an excellent job for the Town and there is no change to their budget.

#4611-4612 Conservation Commission - \$2,875: - Operating expenses for the Conservation Commission. This is an increase of \$875. over last year as the Conservation Easements now have to be monitored..

#4619 Other Conservation - \$5: - Funding will remain at \$5. to keep the line open.

#4711-4721 Debt Service - \$351,375: - the principal and interest on the conservation bonds. This line has decreased as the interest charge has been reduced.

Michael Sununu asked how it is possible that the Town overspent the 2008 budget. Sue McKinnon said that you cannot count reimbursements in the budget – all money spent must be accounted for. However, the Town received a total of \$240,382 in reimbursements on the various lines.

The 2009 Default Budget was presented at \$1,516,116. Personnel Administration was increased because of increased costs in the retirement system. General Government Buildings was increased \$8,000. as no Warrant Article will be presented this year for a Town Hall Expendable Trust Fund. Insurance increased \$8,000. due to increased prices, street lighting increased by \$520. due to increased rates, and Other Communications increased \$6,000. as it is part of the dispatch contract.

Wes then read the Warrant Articles and then the floor was open for questions.

Article 1. Shall the Town of Newfields vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the Warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling One Million, Four Hundred, Fifty-One Thousand, Nine Hundred, Ninety-six Dollars (\$1,451,985.)? Should this be defeated, the default operating budget shall be One Million, Five Hundred, Sixteen Thousand, One Hundred, Sixteen Dollars (\$1,516,116.) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Newfields or by law or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only?

Article 2. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate Fifty-Four Thousand Dollars (\$54,000.) for the purpose of mosquito control by targeting mosquito larvae (known as larvciding) and Arbovirus Surveillance (known as trapping and testing of mosquitoes)?

Wes explained that at the Deliberative Session you may increase or decrease the amount budgeted. Spraying gives individuals a sense of security. Peter Gould stated that 60,000 honey bees on his property were killed and the cause was probably mosquito spraying. Peter was advised to call Dragon Mosquito to be put on their no spray list. Jamie Thompson asked if this could be taken off the Warrant. He was advised that the amount could be changed, even to zero, but the Article cannot be taken off the Warrant.

Article 3. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.) to be placed in the previously established Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund for the purchase of a new fire truck?

(The Selectmen RECOMMEND passage of this article.)

Article 4. Upon Citizen's Petition properly received, of at least twenty-five (25) registered voters. Shall the town grant a lease for the Old Post Office at fair market value, to Main Street Art (a local non profit organization), for a term of five (5) years based on the cost to improve, renovate, and bring the existing facilities up to current building, fire, and accessibility codes. The lessee, Main Street Art, will provide all funding for the improvements, maintenance, and will pay for all utilities within this term in exchange for the lease abatement.

The town cannot sell the old post office building right now. Main Street Art would spend \$35,000. to update the building. There will be no town subsidy to the group for this project. Lease negotiations will be reopened if the Warrant passes. Kelley Corson stated that a multi-year lease needs the town's approval.

Article 5. Upon Citizen's Petition properly received, of at least 25 registered voters. To allow Nancy Kingston, currently owner of the Newfields General Store, a special exception to operate her real estate office, an existing business of 9 years, Nancy Kingston Realty, LLC above the Newfields general Store. A special exception is being requested with no zoning changes.

Wes explained that this is a referendum only as the Planning Board or the voters (by ballot) have the authority to grant permission to occupy the second floor of the Newfields General Store as an office. The general consensus was that it would be better to have an office in that space rather than an apartment.

The people in attendance were reminded that the Deliberative Session on the Town Budget is Saturday, January 31st at the Town Hall. The meeting will begin at 9:00am. Thursday, January 15th, at 7:00pm the ERCSD Budget Hearing will be held at the Exeter High School. Saturday, January 17th at 9:00am am will be the Budget Hearing for the Newfields Elementary School. All residents are encouraged to attend these meetings.

Michael made a motion to adjourn the public hearing at 9:00pm. Rosanne seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Spencer, Administrative Assistant

